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## **IMPACTT: Involving more parents and community members together with teachers in support of education**

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IMPACTT

Involving More Parents and Community Members Together With  
Teachers in Support of Education

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A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in Education:  
Middle Grades Option

---

by  
Emilie Alice Goss  
Julie Diane Orr  
Barbara Anne Osburn

March 1998

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Julie Diane Orr  
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March 1998

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Date

## ABSTRACT

Involving parents and community in education is vital to the success of academic excellence. It is essential that adults be involved in the education and socialization of their children for the next generation.

Adult involvement at Washington Middle School, at the present time, is limited to a very few parents, and community involvement is minimal. The school is staffed by hero teachers who generally feel isolated, confused, and frustrated by the challenge of educating and socializing children for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Therefore, this project has involved itself in the research and the strategies to reach the goals of truly involving parents and community in educating the children at Washington Middle School.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge our mentor, Dr. Irvin Howard, without whom this project would not have come to fruition as soon in our careers as it has. Also, we would like to thank our students for their refreshing exuberance and vitality, and for their ability to help us practice what we have learned as students in our master's program.

Finally, we would like to thank Josie Cabral for her expertise as a Spanish language interpreter and translator. She willingly gave her time and talent to help with translations and interpretations with respect to understanding the Mexican language and culture.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Author Contributions

This project was researched and compiled by Emilie Goss, Julie Orr, and Barbara Osburn. All reading was done individually, and each person wrote the literature review for her section. Emilie Goss reviewed and composed the section on the school's relationship to the parents and the community. Julie Orr reviewed and composed the section on the community's relationship to the school and the parents, including communications with them. Barbara Osburn reviewed and composed the section on the parent's relationship to the school and the community. Then the first draft compilation and editing was accomplished jointly. Second draft additions and deletions, as well as adjusting for single voice composition, was also a joint endeavor. Barbara Osburn was in charge of the typing and the note taking during the group discussions. Emilie Goss conducted personal interviews, and surveys to broaden the knowledge base provided by the literature review, and to accommodate the specific needs and concerns of the parents, community, and staff at Washington Middle School.

The goals, objectives, titles, measures, and strategies were likewise produced during group work sessions, as was the content of the back matter.

## Rationale

Student achievement and the schools ability to provide extra-curricular activities improve as family and community involvement increases. The decline of the traditional two-parent family has contributed to a trend in communities in which the citizens are fearful, anxious, and overly cautious. In turn, they are resistant to accepting school and social responsibilities.

School is often seen as an independent entity in which the students may feel isolated from the community and perhaps may lack fluent communication with the family. Also, home, school and community have cultural values that are specific to their membership. Students must learn to accommodate the differences and understand the similarities.

Schools must provide a safe environment in which students are able to enjoy a relaxed and nurturing social experience that optimizes learning, and this must be done in a way that enables the student to succeed beyond intellectual development to include personal growth and community responsibility. There must also be an alliance between the school, the family, and the community in which there is agreement about achievement goals for all students, and in which parents and community members feel

accepted.

In order for any alliance to work, however, schools must assume the leadership role for initiating a three-way collaboration between families, the community and the school in order to provide support for optimizing the educational environment.

#### Purpose

This project proposes a plan through which parents, community members and teachers will form a proactive collaboration in support of education, and which will bridge the gap that is present in this school community. The city of La Habra has many resources and services available to its residents. The La Habra City School District and Washington Middle School (hereinafter referred to as WMS) have many services and resources available to their students. However, what is needed is a system of networking and leadership that will optimize the accessibility of the city and school programs, thus more effectively serving the community. The purpose of this plan is to organize, add to, and implement these services and resources, and to provide leadership, organization, and networking for their more efficient use WMS.

Home, school and community have cultural values that

are specific to their membership. Students must learn to accommodate many cultures and understand their unique membership within each group. The need to accommodate the changing nature of parenting and education, and the connection between education and work requires the utilization of the students natural support system of family, school, and community in order for them to develop into responsible citizens. Students need to feel that school dynamics are interwoven with the dynamics that occur in the home and in the community. Though there are different activities in each setting, it's important that all work together to create harmonious relationships wherein the integrity of the whole child is realized and maintained.

The African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child" is the philosophy that drives this plan for building a collaborative partnership between family, school and the community in support of children and their education. The village, in this context, provides the safe, social environment necessary for children to grow, learn and become responsible citizens. In the home support system, the parents must understand that adolescence, or transescence, is a developmental stage. They need to be supported with the day to day raising of the child.

Parents need to know how to communicate with educators and members of the community, and they need to be able to develop a partnership with school and community to transmit the values of society to their children. In doing so they will model for their children how to be good citizens and lifelong learners. Families need to be supported by the school and the community in raising their children and teaching them to be responsible, contributing citizens and human beings. Woodruff (1996) says that what goes on in school should be as much about a child's overall life as it is about academics. He further states that one way to do this is by creating schools that reflect and value the child's community, belief systems and culture. "Home and school are the two most important institutions in the developmental life of the child (Woodruff, 1996)."

#### Statement of Needs

"Of the 785 students at WMS, 62% are Hispanic, 34% White, 2% Asian/Pacific and 2% Black ethnic groups (Title VII, 1997)." There is a predominately low socio-economic class whose primary language is Spanish. Over the last two years, there has been an increase of 64.3% students whose primary language is other than English.

WMS is located near the Civic Center in La Habra,



California, on the main street of the city. However, it is considered to be a neighborhood school located in the Barrio. Many students are strongly influenced by gang cultures (the Latino gangs, the party crews, the skaters, the breakers, and the taggers), especially with respect to their standard of dress and physical appearance (body piercing, tattoos, shaved heads, extreme make-up, hairstyles, and hair color). Public impression is that gangs, drugs, and weapons are rampant on campus. There is also a belief that the teaching staff has very low expectations for the students academically, and that the students are generally out of control. To support this general assumption, during a Human Relations Taskforce Meeting in November, 1997, a parent underscored this belief with her remarks about a conversation that she had with a friend who was concerned about her child attending WMS. The friend was appalled that the parent did not get an inter-district transfer to a neighboring community school because of the La Habra schools' reputation for gang violence, low academic expectations, and drugs and weapons on campus.

Many families are economically pressured to relocate often as they struggle with issues like the large number of rental properties in the Barrio that are in a general state of disrepair, frequent changes in employment, and the

inability to participate in home ownership. There are many single parent families, as well as two-parent families, in which the parents are out of the home for extended hours in order to meet the demands of their employment. Often, for economic reasons, more than one family is forced to live in the same single-family dwelling. There are stresses imposed on the children that may cause alienation from their families and their school. This in turn impedes their education and social growth. These conditions tend to cause the children to experience a lack of community and a sense of insecurity as they struggle to belong in their families, schools, and communities. Most of these parents are hesitant to involve themselves in their children's schools. They often believe that they have nothing to offer. However, "Student achievement in school is not so much a question about the parents socio-economic status, but more a question about the parents' involvement in the school (Posnick-Goodwin, 1997)."

There is a small middle-class population WMS who live in the neighborhoods further away from the school and the Barrio. In terms of their neighborhoods and the level of parental support, they are not as susceptible to the strong influence by the gang sub-cultures. The parents of these students tend to plan and attend the special events at

school. There is an active PTSA that sponsors many events during the school year, but the membership is small and attendance is poor. These families tend to be more permanently situated, and the children will probably attend school in La Habra through grades K-12. The two local high schools are located within the city, but they are in the Fullerton Unified School District.

WMS is made up of a staff of 35 teachers, eight para-professionals, four food service personnel, and four custodial personnel. There are also five people in the administrative office, which includes the principal, assistant-principal, two secretaries and a health technician.

WMS has three grade levels; 6,7 and 8. The students are randomly assigned to teams of 3 teachers according to grade-level. The core curriculum includes; Language-Arts/Reading, Science, Social Studies and Math. There are also P.E., and elective classes, which include, for example; Leadership/PALS, Art, Spanish, Music, Journalism, Computers, Wood shop, Video Presentations Class, Yearbook, and various sixth grade explorations.

During the 1997-1998 school year, WMS initiated Block Scheduling two days a week, which allows for more student interaction, teacher teaming, and an in-depth study and

investigations of subject areas. Built into that scheduling change, teachers maintained one planning period per day, and late-start Thursday, which allows for more long-term planning, problem solving, and camaraderie among the members of the teaching staff. The facilities include buildings that are over fifty years old and show normal wear and tear. There are also eleven relatively new, portable classrooms.

During the 96-97 school year the Library/Media center was demolished to make way for the new Library/Technology/Media Center. Construction will commence during the 97-98 school year. There is a multi-use room and an amphitheater, which share a common staging area. There is a science lab, wood shop, band room, a covered-outdoor eating area, and a full-service kitchen. There are four social quad areas where the students are able to meet and socialize during the morning before school, during break, and lunchtime. There is a student-operated Snack Shack and a Student Store which are open every day during the two breaks. The grounds are completely surrounded by chain-link fencing that is currently in need of repair. There are four designated athletic areas that include the South field, the West field, the Southwest court and the Southeast court. The South field is used for soccer and

track and is currently undergoing renovations. The West field is used for soccer and baseball, and the Southwest and Southeast courts are used for basketball and volleyball. The public frequently uses the athletic fields for organized, after-school sports. WMS has a large campus that is maintained by the district's groundskeepers.

### Limitations and Delimitations

As is usual with any new program, there will be various limitations and delimitations, some of which will be in-house and others that will come from the parents and community. Time is a limiting factor because there is always the need for training, planning and preparation in an already overwhelming schedule. However, as the program is implemented over time, and based on its successful outcome, the limitation of time will ease as parental involvement increases. Oftentimes, when a new program is introduced there are some people who may demonstrate a negative attitude because of their fears about how it will impact their daily lives and what will be expected of them. With the promise of continuing professional development, hopefully their fears will be eliminated. Again, as the program develops and is put into practice over time, this will be a non-issue. Because we have recently acquired a

Title VII Grant in the amount of 1.3 million dollars, funding will be a limitation only with respect to the parameters of the grant.

Many of the parents of WMS students consider themselves to be uneducated and therefore unable to help with school programs. They tend to be reticent because they are timid and unsure of themselves, and so it appears that they lack the initiative needed to volunteer. Great effort is expended to encourage and even pressure them to participate in the educational process. They are perceived to be lacking in the commitment to follow through. This makes planning for their involvement difficult. As the parents are introduced to the school environment and become more comfortable being there, they will be more willing to make a commitment to their children's education.

WMS has a safe, positive working environment. The staff is friendly, helpful, and willing to share ideas. The La Habra City School District (hereinafter referred to as LHCS D) has a reputation for being pro-teacher. Teachers are well respected, and their ideas and proposals are met with positive feedback. Though administrative support for this project is not a given, it is expected that a carefully planned presentation of IMPACTT to the Board of Directors will be well received and validated.

Administrative support from the principal at WMS is very positive, encouraging, and motivating.

#### Assumptions

People affected by this project will be the students, parents and community members, and the business community in La Habra. The faculty and staff at WMS will also be affected in a positive, or perhaps a negative way. Students and parents will automatically be positively affected as the students begin to realize that their parents' involvement at school is an affirmation of the value their parents place on education. Parents will come to realize through their involvement in school that they are highly valued members of the school community. Their input in planning and preparation of special programs, their frequent presence in the classrooms, and their interaction with all the students will positively impact student-parent relationships. As the business community becomes involved with the business of education, positive reinforcements begin to appear in their places of business in various forms, for example; notices about school support, bargains for students based on grades, pictures of students of the month, and notices about school events in their windows. This will create a positive



school/community image that will have a rippling effect on the community at large. Soon, all community members will feel a positive impact.

The staff will develop a sense of oneness as they adopt a common purpose toward a school, family, and community partnership. The auxiliary will also begin to feel less estranged from the regular school routine and more a part of the school dynamics. Generally, the limitations will be eliminated as the program is implemented over time.

#### Discrepancy Statement

The LHCS, at the elementary level, has a large number of parents who do participate in the classrooms, but parental involvement at the middle school and high school levels drops off dramatically. A program of this nature takes planning and preparation by its organizers. Time becomes a major factor because of the number of extra-curricular hours it takes from planning to fruition. Though the teachers at WMS recognize the need for a parent/community/school collaboration, it is very difficult for one person to develop the program. Parent involvement in the past has occurred minimally at WMS at the classroom level. The teachers have full responsibility for any plan



that involves using a parent in the classroom. These efforts are usually sporadic and parent follow-through is very limited. With the implementation of a program with the necessary organization and leadership, these problems will be eliminated.

#### Definition of Terms

1. Community Member: A group of people who meet to identify and solve problems.
2. Complimentary Role: Any significant assistance to the educational process at WMS.
3. Formally: Academic matters that relate to the school work.
4. Informally: General nurturance and interest in education such as family discussions, excursions, and parent observations.
5. Interested Citizens: Adults living outside the La Habra area who are interested and willing to become involved at WMS.
6. Keeping the Peace—A Conflict Resolution Guide for Parents

A video program that is presented as a workshop that equips parents and children with a model of conflict resolution that stresses positive

solutions to everyday problems. It addresses such issues as how to overcome struggles within the family, communication skills and strategies to teach verbal and listening skills for better understanding and resolve, and issues of prejudice and discrimination.

a. Parents are guides through an eight week program in which they are instructed in motivation and self-esteem, home-school collaboration, communication and discipline, how the school system functions, drugs, home, school and community, college and career elections, a potluck, and graduation.

7. Minority Group: Any group that does not belong to the political majority (White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant).
8. Parenting Classes: A program that presents a variety of methods that will assist parents in reinforcing positive parenting skills. The classes are conducted in English and in Spanish.
9. Parent Institute for Quality Education: The mission of the Parent Institute for Quality Education is to help bring schools and parents together in the

education of their children. The philosophy states:

- a. All parents love their children and want the best for them.
- b. Parents can provide important information about their children to schools in order to improve the learning process.
- c. Schools can provide parents with valuable suggestions about ways to help their children learn.
- d. Parents and teachers need to work together to ensure the educational success of every child (Mardirosian, 1996).

10. Philosophy of Partnership: Sharing the responsibility of children's education with parents, other family members, and the community.
11. Staff: Includes all employees in the LHCSD.
12. Task Force: A group of people who meet to identify and solve problems.
13. The Family Meeting
  - a. Designed to promote meaningful communication within the family wherein the family gathers in a common place and communicates.
  - b. The Family Meeting is not intended to be used for solving individual problems of family

members. This time is to be free from advice, argument, or problem solving. The meeting is intended to be a special time for family members to meet and communicate.

- c. The Family Meeting should be held about once a week at an agreed upon special time.
- d. Meeting topics should include appreciations, happinesses, disappointments, proud feelings, and sadnesses (Dreikurs, 1964).

## CHAPTER TWO

### A Review of The Literature

The broad range of literature investigated describes a plan for looking hard at our current beliefs and attitudes about home and school relationships and parent involvement in the school. "There is overwhelming agreement that a child is vitally affected by the quality and nature of the relationship between home and school (Barbour, Barbour, 1997)." Also, according to Barbour & Barbour, schools are more effective in educating children when families, schools, and communities work together (1997).

Research has revealed that schools that have improved parent support in education also improved the quality of education and student achievement (Santrock, 1996). Schools have the responsibility of taking the lead in developing a school, parent, and community partnership. School-staff attitude and behavior scaffolds the success of this partnership. Parental partnership that can also be extended into the community will result in more community support for education (Fenwick, 1987).

Due to the dissatisfaction with large, remote, and centralized school bureaucracies, school districts have explored ways to engage parents in decisions such as

school-wide problems, discipline, safety, or introduction of new curriculum. While the small number of parents who have made decisions may not have represented the whole community of school families, the trend is to continue to use this resource to problem solve and govern schools.

"Decisions concerning the experiences of middle grade students should be made by the adults who know them best (Turning Points, 1990)."

Cooperation between families and schools is needed so that the child can mature and learn in a nurturing social environment. Shurr, Thomason, & Thompson restate that a closely knit community of family and school is essential for the child's well-being and that families need to be re-engaged in the education process in meaningful roles and communities connected in serving as additional educational resource, as recommended by Carnegie's Turning Points (1990).

Henderson, Marburger, Ooms believe that the educator's assumptions, practices, and biases need to be examined honestly and changed if necessary to work effectively with the learner's families. The literature researched underscored the need for rhetoric to match reality. The comfort levels of the teaching staff have to be taken into account with regard to the five areas of parental

involvement; parents as partners, parents as collaborators, parents as an audience, parents as supporters, and parents as co-decision makers. Teachers are known to embrace educational philosophies which have run the gamut between, "professionals only" in education and total parental collaboration in educating children (Henderson, Marburger, Ooms, 1995). Teacher self-assessment is needed first and then an evaluation. Perhaps, changes in some attitudes will be necessary to progress towards a more effective partnership between school staff and families of the school community.

The material investigated recognized that each school was unique and each new program for involvement needed to develop its own strategies for forming the school-family partnership. There were some important principles offered in establishing this partnership. For example, the school tone should be open, helpful, and friendly. There should be frequent, clear, and two-way communication with parents. Parents need to be treated as collaborators with a strong supportive role in the education and behavior of their children. Parents should be asked to comment on school policies and share in decision making. The school should aggressively pursue the at-risk parents, such as parents who work, divorced parents without custody, and language

and race minority parents. School administrators need to express and promote the school-parent partnership, and the school needs to encourage family and community participation at the school (Henderson, Marburger, Ooms, 1995).

Autonomy was also named as needed for parent-school partnerships to be successful. The school board and school district superintendent must share their power with principals, teachers, parents, and citizens. A needs' assessment must be compiled to develop meaningful goals for the school. State and district requirements must also be met. A task force comprised of "...parents, students, community leaders, teachers, administrators, business leaders, and representatives of higher education ...

(Fenwick, 1987)" was the recommendation for beginning a reform in school policy with regard to forming a collaboration with parents and community. The next step is " ...the premise that attitudes toward family involvement in learning could be altered by changing the structure and manner in which teachers and parents interacted ...

(Barbour & Barbour, 1997)" and then, "...the task force must make decisions regarding objectives, policies, and strategies for involving parents (Barbour & Barbour, 1997)." While mandated parental support would likely be



ineffective, the school board adoption of the task force recommendations was a crucial component.

#### Who Will Initiate The Process of Re-engaging Parents and Community With The School?

There was a consensus that school staff and parents must be committed to a better communication effort, and that teachers, school boards, and school administrators must take the leadership role in initiating and encouraging parental involvement. The literature recognizes that effective practice for optimizing parent involvement has been thoroughly researched and can be replicated at any school (Barbour, & Barbour, 1997).

It was suggested that the quality of parent and community involvement depend on the attitudes and behaviors of the school staff. There were several points that needed to be considered and addressed, for example; a welcoming school tone must prevail, a working relationship needs time to develop, clearly stated goals and responsibilities are essential for each step and task in order to avoid confusion, a mutually respectful relationship between parents and teachers is difficult when each side views the other with suspicion, and stereotyping and lack of empathy are two barriers to be avoided (Henderson, et al, 1995).

The literature identified parents as the foremost influence on their children's education and socialization. Teachers and school staff working in partnership with parents and families are the next most important aspect of rearing the next generation. Community members are viewed as being able to offer educational opportunities that enrich the education and socialization process of youngsters. In fact, the article insert from Phi Delta Kappan (1997, p. 521), explains how a "volatile mismatch exists between the organization and curriculum of middle grade schools, and the intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal needs of young adolescents." This project endeavors to connect with existing models to address the needs of WMS students, families, teachers, and community. Every literary work studied acknowledged the leadership role in re-engaging parents and community with schools as beginning with the teacher. "Teaching and parenting are the most important tasks performed by people in any society (Swick, Hobson, Duff, 1979)." Parents initiate the learning and development of their children and teachers continue nurturing the child by involving him or her in meaningful growth activities to help the child relate to the world beyond the home. Parents and teachers were seen as having common goals with regard to the child, and,

according to Swick, Hobson, & Duff, they strive to provide the best environment in which the child can develop in the most positive way possible (1979). It was suggested that the quality of parent and community involvement depends on the attitudes and behaviors of the school staff.

#### What Are The Characteristics of The Adolescent?

Middle school aged students (age 10-14 years) were identified as at a distinct developmental stage between childhood and adulthood which has its own set of characteristics and needs which must be recognized and addressed. One of the cognitive characteristics of the adolescent is described as one of intense curiosity. Many times, there could be development on two different cognitive levels, concrete and abstract, at the same time. Youngsters of this age are seen as increasing their meta-cognitive abilities (the ability to understand and articulate how they learn). Middle school aged students are viewed as willing to learn the things that they consider useful and meaningful. Adolescents have been judged egocentric, which is seen as the reason for their difficulty in seeing things and motives from another person's perspective. There is a shifting, in adolescence, from spontaneous creativity (such as drawing, singing, and

dancing) to more cognitive, thoughtful, practiced and rule-bound creations (like poetry, song writing, and theatrical performances). The "... adolescent student learns best in cooperative, decentralized settings where they are constantly interacting with materials and with one another...(Shurr, Thomason, & Thompson, 1996)".

The emotional development of the middle school aged student is explained as affected by chemical and hormonal imbalances. These students are prone to idealistic thinking, and have heroes and idols. Adolescents resemble children more than adults. This youngster has a strong need to feel personally secure, as well as assurances that family members and their family unit are safe. The middle school aged student is increasingly aware of his or herself as an individual, especially when compared to others. Adolescents are overly self-critical, easily offended, and optimistic. Middle school aged students display an emerging sense of humor and need for privacy. Adolescent emotional needs attended to by parents and teachers are considered a critical need. When parents and teachers support and encourage the adolescent, the adolescent tends to think more positively about him/herself. External forces are viewed as powerful forces in forming their personal sense of self.

The middle grade student experiences growth spurts in weight, height, heart size, lung capacity, and muscle strength. Rapid changes in the adolescent body causes a disproportional appearance (big hands and feet, large ears, receding chin). There is a great need for sleep and nutritional demands due to the accelerated changes in the adolescent's body. Sexual development occurs in girls sooner than boys, but both show an increased interest in the opposite gender, during middle school years. Mood swings and shifting from hyperactivity to lethargy within a short span of time is displayed. Parents and teachers, as well as community members, are considered great resources for instructing youth on stress management, healthy body imaging, responsible sexual behavior, nutritional awareness, hygiene, and physical fitness.

Social characteristics of the 10-14 year-old include a move away from being family centered towards peer group orientation. The 10-14 year old follows social fads to the extreme. Peer conformity is expected, and the rejection of adult standards and viewpoints is common. Adolescents fail to smoothly adapt to uncompromising situations, and there exists a social self-consciousness. This age group tends to be argumentative and their responses exaggerated. Many middle school aged students were either extremely shy or

extremely extroverted. While this age group craves peer approval, they also have a strong need for family support.

Middle school students need their peers, but adult validation is also of great importance to their social development. Parents and teachers are seen as facilitators, mentors, and models for youth to monitor their own behaviors for what is normal and socially acceptable. Adults are deemed indispensable in creating safe social environments for youth to interact socially with their peers. Community involvement offers the adolescent opportunities to serve their neighborhoods and use their energies in a self-esteem building way.

#### Ways Parents Enrich Formal Education

There are basically five types of parental involvement; parents as partners, parents as collaborators, parents as an audience, parents as supporters, and parents as advisors and co-decision makers (Henderson, Marburger, Ooms, 1995). Parents and other family members are a child's first and primary educators. Parents and families share the responsibility of educating their children with professional educators. Parents and families continue to teach their children and also carry out a number of obligations relating to their professional partner. Some

of these obligations include medical exams, vaccinations, attendance, permission and information forms, conferences, and enrollment. These tasks are the core of the school/family partnership.

Parents demonstrate the importance of school by their family policies concerning minor illness, absences, truancy, bedtime, TV time, and their help with homework. Parents stimulate and reinforce learning by providing enriching activities such as reading to their children, trips, going to museums, and to the library. Families also discuss careers and work experiences. Parents display curiosity and an interest in learning. Parents also shape educational policy through their involvement or un-involvement in school affairs (Fenwick, 1987). A major role that parents provide as problem solvers is their help with problems in schoolwork or behavior. Problems are rarely resolved without parental or family involvement. Studies show that children's academic achievement improves when there is positive communication between school and home.

School programs, exhibitions, plays, and sports events provide parents with the opportunity to gain information about the school, faculty, and staff. It is unlikely that low-income, minority, or non-English speaking families will

participate as fully in these activities as mainstream families. Families and community members need to feel welcomed into the school. They need reassurance that they belong there. This atmosphere provides the child with a more integrated environment for learning (Barbour, & Barbour, 1997).

Volunteer assistance to the teacher and school has had a long tradition in American schools. Organizing help, obtaining supplies and assistance, trips, tutoring, help with emergencies, volunteering in the classroom or school office, and providing enriching experiences within the school program are some activities parents and families contribute to the child's school. The Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) is one organization that is frequently active in public schools. They sponsor fund-raising events, parent support groups, parent education classes, workshops and seminars. Less formally, parents support each other with car pools, childcare, hotlines, and language access for the non-English speaking families. There are also some school communities with parent advocacy groups in support of families with special needs children.

#### Time, Tone and Communication Are Essential

Time constraints are logistical impediments



regardless of good intentions. A family's financial needs take precedence over volunteerism. Immediate family obligations, such as meals and child-care, have to be considered before school matters can be addressed. Safety and security for families working late at the school-site have to be taken into account. A parent network can be planned to meet those needs.

School disciplinary matters concerning children can be a source of strong emotions and conflict. Both sides will be more successful in communicating with the other if a set pattern of negotiation is in place. Parent involvement is essential to the child's school success. Teachers need more training about how to involve parents effectively. Teachers are less positive about parents being involved in the school process than parents are about getting more involved. Professionals can be a barrier to parent involvement in schools. Suspicious parents and paranoid teachers need to learn to share the child and respect each other's expertise.

Parents are the reason schools operate. Some parents want to be a part of decision making, others want nothing to do with it, and some are afraid of school. Parents will be more open to communication with the school if they are greeted warmly, calmly, and with a respectful manner.

Parents are curious about what happens at school. Sometimes their first visit is because of a problem their child has had at school. James Comer and his colleagues, at the Yale Child Study Center, began the School Development Program (SDP), a collaboration with two New Haven elementary schools to increase parental involvement. His team discovered that first of all, most parents expressed an interest in their child's education. Secondly, they wanted to volunteer at their child's school. Thirdly, they were interested in the school curriculum and teacher instruction for their child (Barbour & Barbour 1997).

"The conference setting at school could mean the difference between positive and negative communication. Telephoning is a good way to begin a dialogue and working relationship with families. Face-to-face informal meetings and sharing workshop activities are the best opportunities for teachers and principals to develop rapport with parents (Barbour & Barbour, 1997)."

Spring (1997) asserts that there have been many parent-school-community collaborations in the history of education in the United States. During colonial times, the Puritans engaged a teacher to teach children in their homes for the purpose of reading scripture and adages,

which made the child a religious and obedient subject of the king. Pre-Revolutionary colonists wanted a school that taught children how to be leaders in their communities. The people demanded a school for children that taught basic reading skills and civil duty but also added a grammar school for college bound students. During Post-Revolutionary America, the community wanted schools to teach children the new national culture. In modern times, high schools were added for the older child. Post-modern comprehensive high schools prepared the student for the job market and also provided Americanization indoctrination for new immigrants. During the 1960s, the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement initiated the beginning of federal control over the policies of public education. Throughout American history, citizens have pressured the government for public education and demanded their children's future be optimized through public education. Parents and communities have had a major influence over what and how schools taught their children.

"Research clearly indicates that parent involvement in the schools will yield better grades, higher test scores, and fewer students who dropout (Hodges, 1977)."

Unfortunately, there are few parents who consistently participate in the process of their child's education.

Though they may cite a variety of reasons for not participating, the fact remains that improvement overall is almost guaranteed if parents become involved.

Parents, when questioned, will adamantly say that they want what is best for their children. During a parent conference, when the parent was asked what his goals were for his daughter he stated, "I want a good future for her. I want her to have a better life than I have, and I know that she must have a good education to have a better life (A. Aguiñiga, personal communication, November, 1997)."

This sentiment is widely felt among the parents of the students at Washington Middle School. Recently, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, who was in the principal's office with his father for disciplinary reasons, was asked what he wanted for his own future. His response was, "I want to have a good future with a family and a good job that pays a lot of money (G. Mendez, personal communication, October, 1997)."

His father agreed that a good life, with a family and a high-paying job was exactly what he wanted for his son. Emotionally he said, "I want my son to have a better life than I have had, and I know that he must have a good education for that to happen (J. Mendez, personal communication, October, 1997)." Collectively, parents want a good future for their children. They will do anything

that they must to guide their children in the right direction to insure their good life. However, when asked to participate in the school's effort beyond just getting them to school, or attending an evening concert, they tend to back away.

For the most part, the responsibility for the future of these students rests on the parents. Though they hesitate to participate at school, they do feed, clothe, and protect their children to the best of their ability, and for all intents and purposes, they are doing the best they can for them with what they have to offer.

The hope for education at Washington Middle School is that there will be consistency between the school and the home, but for parents to become involved in the educational process they need to know more about educational procedures and techniques. Shumow recommends six important goals for parents, specifically; "lead children to value a world of diversity, clarify parental values and philosophies, become involved in decision-making, model and foster positive self-images and caring relationships, advocate for children, and work for greater coordination of services (1997)." It is possible for parents to be good at their job of parenting, and for some it comes naturally. However, there are many parents that need guidance and

instruction through the parenting process and in becoming involved in their children's education. "Parent involvement can help parents enjoy their children more and realize that having children is valuable, honorable, and enjoyable (Hodges, 1997)." However, "the success of parent involvement depends largely upon the teachers who are participating successfully (Marburger, 1980)." Educators look for ways to help make collaboration with parents a positive way to improve conditions for educating students.

Hodges says that rather than expecting parents to come to the school and participate freely when they may feel uncomfortable, the school should go to the parents and let them know that they are needed (1985).

Children need to think of school and family as closely intertwined so that they are better able to succeed in education. Much of what goes on in the classroom bears no similarity to what goes on in the home. Often, the activities developed for the classroom are contrived in such a way as to negate relevance and make transference difficult. Still, the question remains, how much parent involvement in the school is too much? Though the constant comings and goings of parents to the classroom might at first be disruptive and uncomfortable, most teachers would quickly adapt to the activity and find that the pros far

outweigh the cons. The assumptions that educators make about the involvement of parents run along a continuum -- "at one end there are those who say that schools can be effective without any parent involvement; at the other, there are those who feel that schools cannot be effective without close collaboration with parents (Henderson, et al, 1985)."

A good school, in a good neighborhood, with good parents of good children who will attend the good school is not enough to guarantee success for students. It takes commitment from the parents at the level of real involvement in the school process. Parents are wanted and needed in the schools. In fact, the schools are insisting on parental involvement at some level. Some parents, especially those with a primary language other than English, may feel that they are not welcome in the schools, or that they don't have anything to offer. The fact is that these parents have a great deal to offer with respect to the message their observable involvement sends their children. No longer is it a matter of groups of parents who are willing to run the fund-raisers or PTSA. The observable, positive example of the parent's involvement is an excellent way to affirm the importance of education in the minds of the students (Barbour & Barbour, 1997).

Parents sometimes feel apprehensive because of their own negative school experiences, or find teachers to be unwelcoming. Participation may be very difficult for the families with both parents working, however, these obstacles can be overcome with careful planning between the teachers and the parents. According to Debbie Hodges, involvement helps parents feel more confident in their roles as tutors, and they also foster better relationships with the teachers (1977). Parental involvement is of paramount importance to the overall success of children in school. However, in order to determine if parents are involved, it is first necessary to define "parent involvement". According to Vandegrift, (1993),

. . . parent involvement means that parents are involved when they actively participate in school-sponsored activities or help their children with school in ways that are obvious and visible to the children like reading to them or assisting them with their homework. This idea has two key elements. First, parents are supportive. They encourage their children and are sympathetic, reassuring, and understanding. They show a high level of commitment to their children and their education. Second, parents are active. They are doing something that is



observable. This combination of level of commitment and active participation is what makes an 'involved' parent.

With large numbers of at-risk students, it has been shown that parents have a broad spectrum of involvement, from being committed to their children but not participating, to those who participate but are not supportive. So, according to Vandegrift (1993), it is better to evaluate involvement by separating the notions of support and participation, which fall along the continuum of involvement.

It's easy to think of adolescents as adults. They look like adults, and though they are unable to think and reason as sophisticatedly as adults, they don't think and reason like smaller children either. Sometimes parents become frustrated and anxious about their adolescent children and may become tempted to turn them loose rather than to keep working with them. Some parents may find it difficult to recognize that their adolescent has had a major growth spurt physically as well as mentally, and they may continue to treat them as children. So, while adolescents are not yet adult, they are making great strides toward maturity in their thinking, their bodies, and in their sexuality.

In the American culture, according to Rutter (1995), there is a surprisingly negative attitude about adolescents in general. Parents are among those who experience negative feelings about adolescents as they anticipate all the worst from them with fear and trepidation. Rutter states, "They expect a war at home (1995)." Parents find it difficult to remember what these children need in terms of parenting, and there is the expectation that it is impossible to influence them anyway, so why bother. Conflict in the home increases during this time due in part to the new ability of adolescents to grasp abstract ideas. The conflict, however, does not mean that they are experiencing a loss of love for their parents.

Adolescents are at a very difficult age. It's a time when the opposite sex is more important to them than academic achievement, responsibility, and family. Contrary to what many adults may think, adolescents are not hateful, and they do not hate their parents in spite of the increased fighting in the home. In fact, Rutter states, "Kids report continued high levels of respect for their parents, whether single, divorced, or together, and regardless of economic background (1995)."

Rutter says that the teens today are in serious trouble due to the increasing rates of depression, suicide,

substance abuse, delinquency, early sexual activity, and an increased rate of health problems. She further states that the problems are apparently getting worse.

The ability to understand adolescence becomes more difficult when viewed through two lenses; one that shows the number of teens that are limiting their futures with their self-destructive behavior, and the other which clearly shows that teens aren't so bad. The key to helping them through this difficult time in their lives lies in how we treat them. Rutter states, ". . . we aren't treating them very well (1995)."

Parents can often misread what it is that their adolescents want. Some hold on too closely, and some back off. The truth is that adolescents want parental guidance. They need the rules and boundaries, and they need help with their decisions and choices. Unfortunately, they don't always get that guidance. Some parents back off because they think it is cool, but letting go causes confusion. There is a need for balance with teens. Parents have to stay involved, but not smothering, even when their kids are ignoring them. There is never a time in an adolescent's life when they don't need rules and boundaries, even when they say they hate it. However, boundaries, like swaddling clothes, give the kids a sense of security and a feeling

that all is right with their world. Rutter says that they still need to be taught how to do things, and how to think about things, but most of all, they need to know that their parents are there to help when things go wrong (1995).

Though there are tensions in family life, family is the most effective promoter of values, school success and healthful peer relationships. Family provides that safe, comfortable place to return to each day. It is the secure, calm, and confidence building place where adolescents come and go each day. "Successful adolescents have positive relationships with their parents. Without positive relationships, the kids are subject to depression and are likely to do poorly in school (Rutter, 1995)." When parents withdraw, adolescents get into trouble and become angry and unhappy.

Parents have the greater responsibility to become more involved with kids, despite their apparent desire to be left alone. Parents need to help their kids become responsible adults, and to do the right thing even though conflict is an inevitable part of it. Time management is the major source of conflict between parents and teens inasmuch as teens have trouble committing to plans in advance. There is always the chance that something better may come along at the last moment.

Parents often feel powerless with respect to their teens. The topic of sexuality heightens this sense of powerlessness. However, discussions about sex are a part of discussions about adolescents.

When the community becomes involved, the benefits are multiplied. Community involvement will help to ensure that the youth of today develop into "responsible citizens, effective workers, and understand the obligations as well as the privileges of democratic freedom (Howe, II, 1991)."

According to Howe, schools need to become social as well as academic (1991). Schools can not run all the social agencies necessary, but need to have connections to the appropriate agencies, and promote their use. As Heleen said, "In these times, if you care for the child, you have to care for the family. If you care for the family, you have to reach out to the community. We can't reach our academic goals unless we help our community. We can't reach our academic goals unless we help our community address social and economic needs (1992)".

Woodruff (1997) observed that the community/school relationship used to be very natural due to the fact that teachers used to live in the community of the school. Students and parents would see teachers in the market and around town. This contributed to the unification of the

whole education of the child's development.

Today teachers rarely live in the community of the school. More frequently they commute and have no connection to the immediate community of the school. They are not a visible, contributing factor. Woodruff suggests that schools be created which, "reflect and value the child's community, belief systems, and attitude (1997)."

Due to many single parent families, dysfunctional families, or parents who work more than one job or work odd hours, families frequently do not feel connected to their children's schools. Palestis (1993) said that, "Our nation's public schools often serve as surrogate parents. Public schools have become isolated from their communities. Each school has become its own community within a community, with its own laws, ordinances, and hierarchies". Family members are invited to inactively participate by showing up for showcase performances and conferences, but rarely asked to assume any responsibility or control. Perhaps it is because school staff misinterpret "parents' poor participation as lack of concern, while parents often felt staff to be distant, rejecting, sometimes even hostile (Woodruff, 1997)." Whatever the reasons, it is this isolation from the community that public schools must overcome in order to achieve academic and social fitness

for the students.

The federal Goals 2000 legislation, passed into law by Congress in 1994, mandates that "every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children (Posnick-Goodwin, 1997)."

Also, in 1993, the federal government launched a National Partnership in Education Program encouraging the efforts of the private sector. The isolation of the public schools has become obvious and, through these two actions, the federal government has brought attention to this problem and has begun efforts to remedy it. "These efforts are not made to be specific, step-by-step programs, but different methods through which students become involved in their communities, and therefore learn about their rights and responsibilities as citizens, and reduce the isolation of young people and public schools by giving them constructive contact with adults in the community (Howe, II, 1991)."

Since the government has brought into light the need for community involvement in public schools, community and business partnerships have been popping up all over the country. A partnership has been identified as a "cooperation between school and some public agency to share resources and the end result is in promoting the interests

of the school (Gettone, Rucker, & Fail, 1997)."

The school Development Program (SDP), developed by James Comer at Yale University reorganizes the school into a "functioning community, which provides multiple levels and opportunities for heightened parent-staff interactions, affective bonding experiences, and greater cultural understanding (Woodruff, 1997)." The school's climate changes because of the interaction, improving student behavior, and the teachers are able to focus more on the curriculum. SDP is very different from most reform movements because its emphasis is on "active construction of positive, equitable relations between teachers, students, parents and the wider community (Woodruff, 1997)."

Sometimes, the community-school partnership starts with the community. In Gaylord, Michigan, a local bank asked an elementary school to do a series of four murals to be displayed in the main branch lobby. The bank wanted murals depicting activities offered in Gaylord during the four seasons (Milidonis-Fritz, 1997)." Fifteen third-grade students worked in teams after school to complete the murals. "They learned to trust one another and to share in cooperatively creating their mural using the best portions of each other's design (Milidonis-Fritz, 1997)."



The bank has since established a scholarship fund for elementary children who wish to attend visual arts classes outside of the schools. The bank also donates money to the schools in order that they might bring in special art programs and exhibitions. Of course, the Four Seasons Mural is proudly on display in their lobby.

Partnerships with your business community are and extremely valuable asset. Take the time to foster this positive link; it is well worth every minute of your time. Allow the business community to come and observe the skills you are teaching in problem solving and communications during these special after school projects. Everyone in the community benefits (Milidonis-Fritz, 1997).

Joe MacPherson, a car dealer in Orange County, was aware of the financial trouble of Orange County Schools in 1995. He found himself discussing the problem with his employees and finally insisting on a "team" solution. "Team MacPherson" pledged to donate \$150.00 to Orange County Schools from every car that was purchased or leased from any of MacPherson's five dealerships and leasing companies. Buyers had the option of designating which school the money went to, and which specific department or program. Between May and September of 1995, "Team

MacPherson" had raised \$165,000, surpassing their goal by \$15,000. They re-instituted the program the following February through June, this time raising \$325,000. The "Help Our Schools" program continues, but setting a higher goal of one million dollars. "Everyone has a stake in our children's future," says MacPherson (Curran, 1996).

Businesses can get involved with their local schools in a variety of ways, with varying levels of participation. Some businesses decide to enter a long-term relationship or "partnership with a specific class, school, or school district. This has proven to be the most effective. Some businesses feel so strongly that they work with the schools, that they require participation in the partnership as part of the employees' job description, perhaps taking four hours a year to tutor in the local school, or attending and presenting at the annual high-school career fair.

Participation may also be a one-time affair, such as the local architect who was asked to speak to an elementary class on the basics of "sheer stress", after they had read, "The Three Little Pigs." The students then built structures that they thought were strong enough to withstand the wind flow of a hair dryer (Industry Week, 1997).

A Self-study for Washington Middle School, modified with the permission of Henderson, et al, (1995) is essential for the self-assessment necessary to find a starting point for beginning a plan to increase involvement of WMS parents, (Appendix C, D, E, F) La Habra citizens, and the business community of La Habra. A team approach is recommended by Henderson, et al (1995) such as a task force assembled from the parents whose children attend the school, staff who work at the school, and community members from local businesses and organizations, as well as interested citizens in the surrounding neighborhoods. It was strongly recommended that parents, teachers, students, administrators, counselors, and other staff respond to the four questionnaires and that the answers from each group be examined carefully. The categories are based on the principles of partnership schools. Henderson, et al state them as the following:

Every aspect of the school is open, helpful, and friendly. Communications with parents . . . are frequent, clear, and two-way. Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complementary role to play in their children's school learning and behavior. Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to share in the decision

making. The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available. This includes parents who work outside the home, divorced parents without custody, and families of minority race and language. The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families. The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community-at-large (1995).

## CHAPTER THREE

### Taking Personal Interest In Education Enhances Educational Opportunity

WMS has many working programs, which enrich the education of the students and can enable the goals of this project to be implemented. There are many teachers at WMS who run these programs after hours with and without any compensation. They are truly committed individuals who have taken a personal interest and have become involved in making school life for students at WMS well-rounded and enjoyable.

### Programs In Place At Washington Middle School

PALS (Peer Assistance Leaders): "Teens who listen and care and make WMS a better place. Trained in communication, decision making, problem solving, welcoming new students, family issues, alcohol and other drug issues, coping with change, depression, conflict resolution and tutoring (J. Thomas, personal communication, January, 1998)."

Leadership: A student government course to teach the democratic process. Students who participate become the decision-makers for the school and run the fun-raiser

projects at WMS.

Club Live: Providing leadership and having fun without using alcohol and drugs while providing a safe place for students to gather and socialize.

Community Service: Helps the community by providing services such as graffiti wipe-out, cleaning litter from the city streets and lots, and assisting at the public library, etc.

Conflict Management: Students facilitate while disputants determine the right, non-violent solution to a problem that exists between them.

Western Youth Services/Counselors On Campus: counseling by community social services. The objective is a child counseling service for children who are abused in any way.

Discipline Committee:

" . . . meets weekly to brainstorm, survey staff, and consider school-wide discipline issues and ways to be more effective in controlling student behavior.

Different strategies are discussed which will enable the school to run smoothly and efficiently. The goal

is to create an effective plan which encourages students to behave responsibly while encouraging expectations that are clear, fair, and consistently reinforced (M. Bridgeford, personal communication, January, 1998).

**After-School Athletics:** Allows the teachers to see another side of the students and to get to know them on a different level.

**Carnegie Committee:**

Designed as a tool to help our school to specifically plan to incorporate the 8 Turning Points. These Turning Points address the needs of the Middle School age children. Through our self-study survey we can determine how effective we are in implementing these categories—or what's right and what can be improved at WMS. Through the study we have found that our school is fairly right on. It was found that there was a need to be more positive and reward what's good about our student body, rather than emphasizing the negative. As a Carnegie School, we have segued into a multitude of specialized grants. We have been, as teachers, recipients of several training grants to

better our knowledge of transcents. The Committee itself has met with other Carnegie Schools to do self-assessments and to glean knowledge on how to run a more successful program (N. Manzo, personal communication, January, 1998).

**Homework Club:** Mandatory Homework Club is for students who do not complete required homework. They are required to attend a one-hour tutoring program after school, Monday through Thursday. Within that time, the students are to finish missed work. Homework Club is open as well to students wishing to complete their homework at school.

**Homework Hotline:** This provides families with weekly updates of class assignments for their children. It is spoken in English and Spanish.

**Title VII:** The proposed Washington Restructuring Project is designed to provide all English Language Learners (ELL) at WMS, in grades 6-8, with an improved school-wide educational program, including the reforming and upgrading of existing programs. The project intends to educate the ELL students to meet the same rigorous standards for academic performance expected of all students, including meeting challenging State of California standards for



curriculum, content and academic performance. An emphasis will be placed on Native Language Literacy and Second Language Literacy, student achievement of high standards based on California State standards, staff development based on USDE Professional Development Principles (PDP), collaboration and integration of school and community programs, parenting skills, and family involvement.

The Title VII Restructuring Project is a five-year federal grant designed to reform, restructure, and enrich all programs at WMS to meet the needs of the ELL so they can meet the challenging content and student performance standards. The Title VII Program has four main components:

Student Learning Component—This component includes the achievement of English language fluency, English and primary language literacy, mastery of core academic content such as science and mathematics, academic tutoring, career guidance, and activities to promote self-esteem and cross-cultural understanding.

Professional Development Component—This includes staff training for CLAD, BCLAD, and Sheltered Instruction, Spanish language classes, technology training, multi-cultural education, and training in literacy and language development.

Parent Involvement/Education Component—This component includes the development of a Family Center, classes in parenting skills, home-school liaison services, health and social service referrals to appropriate community agencies, and parent leadership training.

Community Collaboration and Support Component—This includes counseling for at-risk students, and collaboration with local community and education agencies (P. deLoetz, personal communication, January, 1998).

#### The Project

Goal 1: Opportunities for family involvement in school.

Objective 1: Parents will attend classes to learn methods for reinforcing positive parenting skills.

Title: Cool Parents

Measure: Sign-in sheets for roll call.

Objective 2: To provide a family math meet.

Title: Family Math Meet

Measure: Sign-in sheet and class evaluation from attendees.

Strategy: Prepare and send home with students invitations and response forms to the students' families inviting them to an evening math meet.

Strategy: Organize a list of students and their families into teams to participate in a math competition at least one time during the school year.

Strategy: Arrange teams into groups of four or six keeping families together and adding students without family members present to families of less than six.

Strategy: Organize materials and furniture for in the multi-purpose room.

Strategy: Organize prizes, materials, and furniture for the math meet.

Strategy: Organize school staff members to supervise the math games, keep score, and award prizes.

Objective 3: Develop and implement a parent advisory group as part of the grade level planning teams each month during the school year.

Title: Team Planning Meetings

Measure: Teacher evaluation of parent participation at the meetings.

Strategy: Invite parents to the monthly planning Meetings (See Appendix G & H).

Strategy: Survey parents for their willingness to attend planning meetings on late-start team planning days each month.

Strategy: Sort family responses, organize, and contact family members who gave positive responses.

Strategy: Assign one parent to each team for one quarter (Once a month for three meetings).

Objective 4: To provide a Homework Helpline

Title: Homework Helpline

Measure: Tally incoming calls from students.

Strategy: Organize parents and tutors on a telephone tree according to their strengths, abilities, and willingness to participate.

Objective 5: Parents will monitor student agendas at least once a week.

Title: Agenda Check

Measure: Parent Response.

Strategy: Teachers will write messages, in Spanish or English as appropriate, in the agendas at least once a month.

Strategy: Parents will be notified in writing that they should monitor their children's agendas to be sure that they are filling them out.

Strategy: Parents will acknowledge teacher messages (English/Spanish) by signing the comment section at least once a month on a Friday (See "Agenda Messages" in Appendix 2).

Objective 6: Parent Teacher (PTSA) Lunches

Title: Parent of the Month

Measure: Teacher and parent attendance.

Strategy: PTSA President and school principal will organize with the members.

Objective 7: Taping books for cross-age tutoring.

Title: Project Read

Measure: Student use as measured by check-out cards.

Strategy: Language Arts teachers will organize and include in regular classes.

Objective 8: To establish parenting classes for

English/Spanish speaking parents.

Title: Parents in the Know

Measure: Sign-in by attendees.

Strategy: Using qualified personnel from within the district, implement a program of quality classes to help bring schools and parents together in the education of their children.

Strategy: Hire professionally trained instructors.

Strategy: Contact the Parent Institute for Quality Education.

Strategy: Payment through Title VII Grant.

Strategy: The parents participate in classes.

Strategy: Classes meet once a week for eight weeks.

Strategy: Weekly meeting format will consist of specific topics.

Week 1: Orientation and  
Motivation and Self-  
Esteem

Week 2: Home/School  
Collaboration

Week 3: Communication and

Discipline

Week 4: How The School System  
Functions

Week 5: Drugs, Home, School and  
Community

Week 6: College and Career  
Elections

Week 7: Potluck

Week 8: Graduation

Objective 9: Parents and teachers collaborate to  
ensure the educational success of  
every child.

Title: Parents and Teachers as Collaborators

Measure: Minutes of parent-teacher meetings.

Strategy: Parents provide valuable information  
to the school in order to improve the  
learning process.

Strategy: Teachers provide parents with valuable  
suggestions about ways to help their  
children learn.

Objective 10: Parents and children will learn  
conflict resolution that focuses on  
positive resolutions to everyday  
problems and the stresses within the

family and the community.

Title: Family Meeting

Measure: Sign-in sheet by attendees.

Strategy: Hire a facilitator to teach "The Family Meeting"

Strategy: Parents will attend a workshop.

Strategy: Purchase Keeping the Peace: A Conflict Resolution Guide For Parents video and practical guide through Orange County Department of Education, Media Services Unit, 200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 or call 1-800-414-5844 or (714)966-4341.

Strategy: Arrange training options:

Plan A - One day - 6 hour training and one hour lunch.

Plan B - Two evenings - 3 hours training each evening.

Plan C - Three evenings - 2 hours training each evening.

Strategy: Gang and violence prevention

Objective 11: To provide a parent resource room with videos and books to check out.

Title: Parent Resource Room



Measure: Usage as determined by check-out cards.

Strategy: Arrange for a room or a corner of a room where resources can be displayed for check-out by parents.

Strategy: Establish a system for collecting parenting books and videos to supply the resource room.

Strategy: Establish a check-out procedure and return policy.

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for community involvement in school.

Objective 12: To provide a community math meet.

Title: Community Math Meet

Measure: Sign-in and anonymous evaluations.

Strategy: Organize students and community members, including merchants, to participate in a math competition at least one time during the school year.

Strategy: Invite local businesses and students To an evening math meet.

Strategy: Organize a list of students and community members into teams of four to participate in a math competition at

Objective 13: City of La Habra will conduct

Community Services Workshops and offer opportunities for internship in community service.

Title: Parks and Recreation Program

Measure: Enrollment.

Strategy: Survey community members to determine interests and goals.

Strategy: Meet with Community Education Coordinator to collaborate on possible class themes and internships.

Strategy: Advertise in the school newspaper, Chalktalk, and Middle Years.

Objective 14: To offer mentoring and tutoring during school breaks and Saturdays (winter, spring, summer).

Title: School Turbo Classes (STC)

Measure: Attendance and Sign-in.

Strategy: PALS and PALS advisor will investigate colleges and mentoring/tutoring agencies and develop a schedule.

Objective 15: Athletic Scholarships for students who might be failing in academics.

Title: Cool Kid Scholarships

Measure: Response from community clubs.

Strategy: Contact local men's and community clubs (Elk's, Lion's Rotary, etc.) and arrange a sponsorship for athletic scholarships for students with athletic promise.

Objective 16: Arts in the community.

Title: Arts in the Community

Measure: Community response via response forms left at the exhibit sites.

Strategy: Children artists producing works to be displayed in the community.

Strategy: Children authors donating books to the Public library.

Strategy: Students writing books with parents about relevant and personal issues in life.

Goal 3: Provide opportunities for staff, family and community training and interactions.

Objective 17: Extended education through the City of La Habra.

Title: Extended Ed

Measure: Attendance and anonymous evaluations.

Strategy: Representative from La Habra extended

education will meet with parents groups to explain educational opportunities, i.e.; English/Spanish literacy, citizenship, computer literacy, health and nutrition, cooking, car mechanics, basic home repair, and youth group leadership training with community service required.

Strategy: City of La Habra will provide Youth job service/apprenticeships, with 14-16 hired for wages.

Strategy: School/community service program facilitator will initiate community service work for 11-13 year olds for school service points.

Objective 18: Community merchants will provide the school with incentives for academic success.

Title: Academic Reinforcement from the Merchants

Measure: Merchant participation.

Strategy: Merchants will provide the community with informational newsletters about school events, student awards, and

school needs.

Strategy: Flyers on counters, posted awards posters, school event calendars.

Strategy: Merchants will provide award T-Shirts, coupons for family discounts.

Strategy: Merchants will provide booths at career fairs, parent orientation days and special school events.

Strategy: Merchants will provide mentoring and tutoring, job training, jobs, and apprenticeships.

Strategy: Merchants will provide scholarships for sports (city league athletics, dance, gymnastics, and cheerleading participation), and academics (summer camps for math, science and computers).

Strategy: Merchants will provide school supplies, transportation and services without charge when possible.

Strategy: Merchants will provide day care, sponsorship and service for families to attend school events.

Strategy: Merchants will pay for extra liability insurance for extra off-campus

activities.

Objective 19: Summer math and ELD academies.

Title: Math Academy

Measure: Enrollment.

Strategy: Summer training for teachers.

Strategy: Hold summer Math Academy classes for two to three weeks every summer.

Objective 20: ESL for adults

Title: Adult ESL

Measure: Enrollment.

Strategy: Acquire necessary materials to provide adult ESL classes.

Strategy: Evening classes four days per week, three hours each session.

Objective 21: Family English classes.

Title: Kids Teaching Parents English

Measure: Sign-in and evaluation forms.

Strategy: To be included as an element in Adult ESL classes.

Strategy: Presented two nights per month as a family activity.

Objective 22: Professional Development classes for the purpose of training teachers to include parents in the classroom to

support student learning.

Title: Professional Development

Measure: Teacher/parent response.

Strategy: Access the Title VII Coordinator and community/family liaison to provide teachers and other school staff with strategies and insights in methods to involve families in the classroom and the school.

Strategy: Title VII Coordinator, and community service interns will provide time and place for parent networking (carpooling, child-care, employment, housing, help hotlines, household items, clothing and other emergency services).

Strategy: Provide the PTSA with information and strategies to involve parents who usually do not participate in PTSA.

Objective 23: Identify school challenges.

Title: School Challenges Task Force

Measure: Minutes of meetings and attendance.

Strategy: Enlist parents, school staff, and representatives from the community

(City Council, Police Department, Rotary, Lions Club, Elks Club, and merchants).

Strategy: Send flyers to parents, and representatives from the community (see above) to survey to see if they are willing to serve on the School Challenges Task Force.

Strategy: Meet with school principal and school staff at the school site for an overview of the School Challenges Task Force.

Strategy: Survey school staff to see who would be willing to be part of the School Challenges Task Force (See Appendix).

Objective 24: Explore ideas and solutions for educational efficiency.

Title: Educational Improvement Plan (EIP)

Measure: Tally responses.

Strategy: Use information gathered through questionnaires 1,2,& 3 (see appendix)

Strategy: Prioritize school needs based on the outcome of the questionnaires.

Objective 25 : Health care center on campus.



Title: Health Care Initiative

Measure: Community use.

Strategy: Initiate and investigate opportunities  
for grants to provide a family health-  
care center on campus (future  
investigations).

## CHAPTER 4

### Conclusion

At WMS a parent/community/school partnership occurs, for the most part sporadically, with the exception of those parents who usually participate in their student's schools. With the implementation of this project there will be a three-way partnership clearly established between parent, community, and school. Allowing five years for complete implementation will reassure the teaching staff that each new thing they are expected to do will not require elaborate planning or preparation on their part.

Parents will be pleasantly surprised when they come to realize the school's need for their support, input, and encouragement as the program becomes fully implemented. The hope is that the parents and community members will come to realize that they are needed and valued at the school.

The school is like the non-custodial parent that has the child for the day. When the child returns home for the night, he should be able to be in accord with the things that occur there during those hours. He should also trust that he will be prepared for responsible community life as a contributing citizen and worker.

Some parents feel brushed-off by the school. They say things like; "I don't feel welcome." "I don't know what to do when I am there." "I feel like I am in the way." "I don't speak English so how can I possibly help." "I don't understand all that I should so how can I be of help in the school?" "I don't know how to do that math." Therefore, it is easy to understand why they may not feel valued, or that what they have to offer is of any value.

Parents, when in partnership with teachers, have access to the school and the processes of educating their children. Children quickly realize that when their parents are spending time on campus, for any reason, they are important to their parents inasmuch as their parents are participating in the process.

Community members say, "The only time I hear from the school is when they want things like money or sponsorship or supplies (personal communication, November, 1997)." "I had no idea that all this was going on at school (personal communication, November, 1997)." In order for the students to realize that what they are learning in school will transfer to what they will be required to do when they are out there on their own, the members of the business community must be actually involved in education.

Children need to be educated and prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup>

Century. Therefore, the leaders, in the community and in the schools, need to be rethinking about schools and family and community, and how they relate to children, academics, socialization, and productivity. The school itself must be an institution that works within the community and that must include student participation. Healthy parent and child relationships are essential to the success of any school-restructuring plan. Children are the greatest resource we have. They must know how to learn, contribute, and participate in the grand picture. Schools cannot maintain their relevance as a valid source of knowledge when teachers fail to connect to students by tapping into their styles and innate abilities. "Parents can be powerful allies bringing school and community into synchronization with home and school being too oft the most important institutions in the development of the child (Woodruff, 1997)."

Community service is recreating a small village where parents and children alike are participating. Community service is an ideal which children should be raised with as part of their growing up. "They must make a life and a living, and they must understand that they are connected to their neighborhood and that service is the rent we pay for living (Kinsley, 1994)."

Vandegrift says, "Parent involvement is not predefined. Each district will use its own strategies. Parents need to be supportive, active, and provide something observable (1993)."

## Calendar

This project is a work in progress and the calendar should be considered a proposal of events and be subject to change as needed. The plan was begun in the fall of 1997 with the acquisition of the Title VII Grant and the subsequent hiring of the grant coordinator and the coordinator's district liaison.

**Proposed Calendar of Events 1997-2001**

Goal	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
I	Obj.1 Cool Parents Obj.2 Family Math Meet	Obj.3: Team Planning Meetings Obj.5: Agenda Check Obj.8: Parents In The Know Obj.9: Parents and Teacher As Collaborators	Obj.4: Homework Helpline Obj.6: Parent of The Month Obj.7 Project Read Obj.10: Family Meeting Obj.11: Parent Resource Room		
II	Obj.18: Academic Reinforcement From Merchants	Obj.12: Community Math Meet Obj.16: Arts In The Community	Obj.14: School Turbo Classes Obj.15: Kool Kid Scholarships	Obj.13: Parks and Recreation Program	
III	Obj.19: Math Academy	Obj.22: Professional Development Obj.23: School Challenges Task Force Obj.24: Educational Improvement Plan	Obj.17: Extended Ed	Obj.20: Adult ESL Obj.21: Kids Teaching Parents English	Obj.25: Healthcare Initiative

## Evaluation

The following are proposed methods for evaluating the program. They will be ongoing throughout the implementation of the program and will be used to monitor and modify as necessary. The methods for evaluating the program are sign-in sheets to monitor attendance, tally sheets to measure usage and participation, parent/teacher response forms, anonymous questionnaires, enrollment sheets for parenting classes, minutes of team meetings, community/business response forms, and merchant participation. The most important part of the evaluation process for this project is its simplicity and ease of use.

## Recommendations

Those who would like to create a program to increase parental and community involvement should understand that to start slow and to keep it simple is more efficient overall. It is easy to become overwhelmed when working with the public and changing the status quo at the school site. It is more beneficial to build on small successes than to become frustrated by moving in too many directions at once. Instead, make use of the advice from those who are experienced in program plan and development.

Everyone involved in the program plan must know what

his/her role is and what is to be accomplished. In order to avoid confusion and chaos, clearly define the role of leadership.

Members must communicate with one another and generally agree on the direction in which they are moving in order to implement the plan effectively. Make sure that everyone has the opportunity to voice his/her concerns to avoid the problems that can develop as a result of misconceptions or miscommunications.

Ask the principal for his/her support. He/She is familiar with what is already in place with respect to grants and other programs in the district and at the site. The support of the principal is vital to keeping staff moral up. He/she, along with other leaders at the school site, can be instrumental to the success or failure of the plan. The principal is also important as an agent of the school in making and sustaining contacts in the private sector as well as in the business and professional sectors.

Prepare a calendar of goals and objectives with specific dates for meeting deadlines. Be sure to plan celebrations and informal gatherings to help keep moral up, to maintain a positive and friendly tone, and to diffuse stress and anxiety. Be ready to adjust and refocus because the project is not a complete and closed program. It is an

open-ended process that builds upon itself, and on the needs of the community and staff, creating a totally new culture in your school.



## APPENDIX A

### Agenda Messages

1. Thank you for your note.

Gracias por su nota.

2. Would you be able to visit our class on \_\_\_\_\_?

¿Podría usted visitar en nuestra clase en el \_\_\_\_\_?

3. \_\_\_\_\_ is very responsible about his/her work.

\_\_\_\_\_ es muy responsable en sus tareas.

4. I would be glad to talk with you about his/her progress.

Sería un placer para mi hablar con usted sobre su progreso.

5. \_\_\_\_\_'s conduct has improved.

La conducta de \_\_\_\_\_ ha mejorado.

6. \_\_\_\_\_ is not working up to his/her ability level.

\_\_\_\_\_ no se está aplicando a la altura de su capacidad.

7. \_\_\_\_\_ is easily distracted in school and needs to improve his/her work habits.

\_\_\_\_\_ se distrae facilmente en la escuela y necesita mejorar sus habitos de estudio.

8. I would like a conference with you as soon as possible.

Deseo reunirme con usted lo antes posible.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ is a very likable child, and I'm sure you'll see more progress in his/her schoolwork in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_ es un niño/una niña simpatico (dimpatica), y estoy convencido (convencida) de que usted vera pronto más progresos en sus estudios.

10. \_\_\_\_\_ works hard on his/her assignments and is anxious to please.

\_\_\_\_\_ es muy aplicado (aplicada) en sus tareas y tiene muchos deseos de complacer a los demás.

11. \_\_\_\_\_ has been doing good work generally, although he/she has not been consistent.

\_\_\_\_\_ es, por lo general, un (una) buen (buena) alumno (alumna), pero no estudia de forma constante.

12. I am very proud of \_\_\_\_\_'s fine work.

Estoy muy orgulloso (orgullosa) de la capacidad de \_\_\_\_\_.

13. Although there has been some improvement in \_\_\_\_\_'s attitude toward his/her schoolwork and the other students, it is not consistent.

Aunque la actitud de \_\_\_\_\_ ha mejorado con respecto a sus estudios y a los demás alumnos, sigue poco constante.

14. \_\_\_\_\_ will continue to need constant encouragement from both of us.

\_\_\_\_\_ seguirá necesitando orientación y estímulo tanto de parte de usted como de parte mía.

15. It is a real pleasure to work with such a conscientious, well-mannered child.

Es una gran satisfacción trabajar con un niño (una niña) tan concienzudo (concienzuda) y de buenos modales.

16. \_\_\_\_\_'s fine attitude and spirit of cooperation are reflected in his/her excellent work.

Su excelente actitud y espíritu de cooperación se ven reflejados en su rendimiento excelente.

17. He/she is a dependable student.

Es un alumno (una alumna) cumplidor (cumplidora).

18. \_\_\_\_\_ is doing satisfactory work and is preparing well for \_\_\_\_\_ grade.

\_\_\_\_\_ hace progresos satisfactorios y se prepara bien para el \_\_\_\_\_ grado.

19. His/her tardiness affects his/her performance and also disrupts the other students.

Su falta de puntualidad afecta sus estudios y también interrumpe a los demás alumnos.

20. \_\_\_\_\_ does good classwork when he/she is present, but his/her frequent absences cause difficulties.

\_\_\_\_\_ es un buen alumno (una buena alumna) cuando asiste a clase, pero sus frecuentes ausencias causan problemas.

## APPENDIX B

### School Challenges Task Force

A self-study for Washington Middle School, modified with the permission of Henderson, et al, is essential for the self-assessment necessary to find a starting point for beginning a plan to increase the involvement of WMS parents, La Habra citizens, and the business community of La Habra. A team approach is recommended by Henderson, et al, such as a task force assembled from the parents whose children attend the school, staff who work at the school, and community members from local businesses and organizations, as well as interested citizens in the surrounding neighborhoods. It was strongly recommended that parents, teachers, and students, administrators, counselors, and other staff respond to the four questionnaires that follow and that the answers from each group be examined carefully. The categories are based on the principles of partnership schools. Henderson, et al (1986) state them as the following: "Every aspect of the school is open, helpful, and friendly. Communications with parents frequent, clear, and two way. Parents are treated as collaborators in the educational process, with a strong complimentary role to play in their children's school

learning and behavior. Parents are encouraged, both formally and informally, to share in the decision making. The school recognizes its responsibility to forge a partnership with all families in the school, not simply those most easily available. This includes parents who work outside the home, divorced parents without custody, and families of minority race and language. The principal and other school administrators actively express and promote the philosophy of partnership with all families. The school encourages volunteer participation from parents and the community-at-large."

## APPENDIX C

### Questionnaire #1

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUR SCHOOL

A. Physical characteristics of your school:  
(Answer "yes" or "no")

- ☐ Does it look well kept?
- ☐ Is there an obvious entranceway?
- ☐ Are the grounds well tended?
- ☐ Is there a place for parents to park when they visit the school?
- ☐ Is there a library?
- ☐ Is there an adequate and comfortable lunch area?

B. Location of your school:  
(Answer "yes" or "no")

- ☐ Do most of your families work within 30 minutes by car from the school?
- ☐ Do most of your families live within 10 minutes by car from the school?
- ☐ Is there adequate public transportation to and from the school?
- ☐ Do parents and teachers feel safe in the area around the school?

C. Relations of the school and community:  
(Answer "yes" or "no")

- ☐ Does the school staff have the same ethnic and social background as the families in the school?
- ☐ Do you consider the turnover rate of your staff high?
- ☐ Has there been more than one principal in the last five years?
- ☐ Do most of the students live in the immediate neighborhood?
- ☐ Have there been any significant political battles about the school in recent years?

D. The school facility as a resource to the community:  
(Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is it open after school hours for visits or meeting?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a community playground or playing fields on the school grounds?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is it available and used for community events or community education?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is it a polling place on election day?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school sponsor events for the community?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school provide space for daycare or after-school care?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are school resources and equipment available for community use (e.g., sports, equipment, gym, costumes, laboratories?)

E. The school's reputation in the community:  
(Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is it known for a strong academic program?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is it generally thought of as a "good" school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is it free of chronic discipline problems and vandalism?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do many of the families in your attendance area use private or parochial schools?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school offer a variety of non-academic and extracurricular programs, both during and after school?

F. Special features for which the school is known:  
(Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Team teaching
- \_\_\_\_\_ Open classrooms
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tracking by ability or performance
- \_\_\_\_\_ Smaller schools within the school
- \_\_\_\_\_ Special and compensatory education programs (community service units for school credit)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Magnet programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other strong programs (drama, music, sports, arts, etc.)

## APPENDIX D

### Questionnaire #2

#### KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN YOUR SCHOOL

It is recommended that this information be gathered from student data cards or by guessing. Do not ask students for this data.

- A. What proportion of students come from:  
(Estimate %)
- ☐ Single-parent households
  - ☐ Two-parent households
  - ☐ Foster homes or institutions
  - ☐ Non-parent households (relatives or guardians)
- B. What proportion of children have ever experienced a serious disruption (separation, divorce, or death) in the family? (Check one)
- ☐ Less than 25%
  - ☐ About half
  - ☐ The great majority
- C. What is the economic/educational status of the families? (Estimate %)
- ☐ Proportion below poverty level (or eligible for free lunch program)
  - ☐ Proportion with at least one parent college-educated
  - ☐ Proportion owning at least one automobile
  - ☐ Proportion with a telephone at home
  - ☐ Proportion that have undergone serious stress within the last two years
- D. What is the racial/cultural background of the families?
- ☐ Proportion of racial minorities (estimate %)
  - ☐ Number of different languages spoken by parents (identify which ones)
  - ☐ Proportion from cultural or religious minorities to which school should be sensitive



(diet, holidays, medical issues  
etc.) (estimate %)

- E. What proportion of children live in families where both parents, or the custodial parents is employed outside the home for most of the school day? (check one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 25%  
\_\_\_\_\_ About half  
\_\_\_\_\_ The great majority

- F. What proportion of families is new to the community this year (check one)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 25%  
\_\_\_\_\_ About half  
\_\_\_\_\_ The great majority

- G. What proportion of children is handicapped or in need of special education (check one)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 10%  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 25%  
\_\_\_\_\_ About half

## APPENDIX E

### Questionnaire #3

#### ASSESSING THE FAMILY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

##### Principle #1: School Climate (Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do office personnel greet parents (in person or on the phone) in a friendly, courteous way?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do posted signs warmly welcome parents and visitors?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are there directions (written or posted) for parents and visitors to find their way around school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a comfortable reception area for parents and visitors, equipped with a coat rack and information about the school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there an orientation program for the incoming class of students and their families?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a program for helping mid-year transfer students and their families to settle in the school (parent or staff member acts as host)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are there regular social occasions or events where parents and school staff can get to know each other?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the principal have clearly posted office hours when parents and students can drop in to talk?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school permit parents to observe in class?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school have an "Open Door" policy where parents are welcome at any time during the school day?

##### Principle #2: Communication (Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a school newsletter with up-to-date information about holidays, special events, etc.?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school send home a calendar listing dates of parent-teacher conferences, report cards, holiday schedules, and major events?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school send home a directory of key PTSA representatives and school personnel—

With phone numbers?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school hold annual back-to-school night/open house?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school have a hotline for parents and students to deal with emergencies, rumors, and other "burning" questions?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do your policies encourage all teachers to communicate frequently with parents about their curriculum plans, expectations for homework, grading policies, and how they should help?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do parents know where to go with their concerns, questions, and complaints?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the principal review all the school's written communications, including report card format, and how test results are reported to make sure they are respectful of a parent's adult status and yet easy to understand?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are parents informed of their rights? This includes access to school records, due process in disciplinary actions, and participation in special education decisions?

Principle #3: Parents as Collaborators and Problem Solvers (Answer "yes" or "no")

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school require at least one parent/teacher conference each year for each student?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school offer to set up parent/teacher conferences upon request?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school provide in-service training or other opportunities to help teachers communicate and collaborate with parents?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is there an early warning policy where teachers consult with parents promptly if a child is falling behind or having social problems?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school inform parents right away if a student doesn't show up for school?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are the parents promptly consulted if there is a pattern of unexcused absences?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school confer with parents on the choice of classroom settings and/or teachers?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school require parent approval on the student's elective choices?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are training and resources (such as a parent

advocate) provided for parents of special needs students to help them participate in Individualized Education Plan and other Processes?

Principle #4: Parents as Advisors and Decision Makers (Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a policy for informing non-custodial parents about their children's performance and school events?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers sometimes meet outside school hours with parents who have jobs and cannot easily get away during the working day?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school hold evening and weekend events for its families so that employed parents (mothers, fathers, others) can come to see the school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ If there is a substantial minority language population at the school, are written communications provided in that language?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there in-service training offered for teachers on how to deal with problems caused by divorce or separation, such as how to avoid being caught between warring parents, or the impact of family breakup on children?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are there any special programs, such as peer-group discussions, for students whose parents are separating, divorced, or deceased?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there an outreach program for parents—especially minority groups—who do not participate at all in school events, e.g., where faculty or parent volunteers are willing to make home visits or attend church meetings to answer questions, allay fears, and explain the importance of being involved in their children's education?
- \_\_\_\_\_ When a particular parent refuses to cooperate with the principal or teacher, is there a schools staff member trained to intervene and work with that parent?

Principle #6: Promoting a Philosophy (Answer "yes" or "no")

- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school have a written statement about partnership with parents that is clearly

available, especially in all written publications?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are there in-service opportunities for training teachers to work with parents?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is time at staff meetings devoted to discussing working with parents and to reinforce teacher's efforts with parents?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are teachers encouraged to consult with the principal if they are having difficulty dealing with a parent?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the principal offer to sit in at meetings with teachers and parents or to mediate any dispute between them?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the principal substitute in the classroom or make substitutes available to allow teachers and other staff to have meetings with parents?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school offer assistance to help parents with babysitting, transportation, or other logistical difficulties, so that they may attend school events?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are space, resources, and staff support (e.g.; reasonable access to a copying machine, typing services, a desk) provided for parents' school related activities?

Principle #7: Volunteer Participation (Answer "yes" or "no")

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the school have an organized volunteer program with a coordinator (paid or volunteer)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the program draw from retired people, business community, local citizens, and students, as well as parents?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is there a wide variety of jobs available for volunteers, including ones that could be done at home or on weekends?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are all parents expected to volunteer in some way during the school year?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is the program reassessed periodically, with the participation of parents, teachers, and other volunteers, to ensure that the program is meeting school needs effectively?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are local businesses and community organizations contacted to provide learning opportunities outside the school and to

explore career options for students?

\_\_\_\_\_ Has a local business (or other institution)  
been asked to "adopt" your school?

## APPENDIX F

### Questionnaire #4

#### ASSESSING THE PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP

(Answer "yes" or "no")

##### Principle #1: Classroom Climate

- \_\_\_\_\_ Are parent observers welcome in the classroom?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the classroom organized so that a parent can see what happens easily?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are examples of every child's work displayed regularly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the classroom routine (agenda) written down and clearly posted?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Can the parent move from class to class with their child?

##### Principle #2: Communication

- \_\_\_\_\_ Are parents informed at the beginning of the year how they can reach the teacher?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the teacher tell the parents about the good things, as well as the problems?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the teacher try to communicate at least once a month with each family (or regularly)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the teacher talk to parents in person (or on the phone), in addition to sending written messages?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the teacher provide regular opportunities for parents to see their child's written work?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the teacher let parents know of expectations for homework, grading policies, and how parents can help?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the teacher let parents know what information about the child is needed to help teachers do a better job (e.g., family stress or major changes in family—illnesses, birth, death, divorce, etc.)?

##### Principle #3: Parents as Collaborators

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers ask parents for their advice on

how to deal with their children?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is there an early warning system for notifying parents if a student is falling behind and/or having social problems, so that teachers might confer with them about the situation?

\_\_\_\_\_ Before parents are informed about a serious problem, are other school staff consulted to gather their perspectives on the student?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are parents encouraged to advise teacher when a child is exhibiting a learning or school adjustment difficulty at home?

\_\_\_\_\_ In suggesting ways parents can help at home, does the teacher take into account a student's particular background and situation?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers make it clear to parents that parents must respect their need for time alone with their own families?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers help parents understand that their child's needs must be balanced with those of the whole class?

#### Principle #4: Parents as Advisors and Decision Makers

\_\_\_\_\_ Are parents with questions and ideas about school policy encouraged to play an active role in the school?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers attend parent-teacher organization meetings regularly?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers listen actively to parent's concerns and pass them on to the principal and/or counselors?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers make it clear that some decisions about a child are not negotiable (e.g., grades or promotion)?

#### Principle #5: Outreach to All Families

\_\_\_\_\_ Are teachers adequately trained and supported in their dealings with the problems of divorced families?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers make special efforts to reach families from other cultures (e.g., home visits and translators)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers meet outside regular school hours if necessary, with parents who are employed?



- \_\_\_\_\_ Are teachers persistent in their efforts to reach parents who try to avoid coming to school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Will teachers make a home visit if that is the only way to meet a parent?

Principle #6: Volunteers

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers use volunteers creatively (both parents and other citizens) to meet needs in the classroom?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do teachers expect every parent to help in some way, and are parents offered a variety of ways to do so?

APPENDIX G

Invitation For Team Planning Meetings

**Washington Middle School**

716 E. La Habra Blvd. La Habra, Blvd. 90631

Dear Parents and Family Members,

Our team would like to invite you to attend our monthly planning meeting on one or more late-start Thursdays. These meetings are held once a month between 8:15 and 9:15 a.m. We do long and short-range planning of cross-curricular activities and team purchases, social activities, problem solving, and rapport building. Your input and support will help us to plan more efficiently for your children and for the school.

Sincerely,

(Team Members Names)

.....  
cut here and return bottom portion with your child to his/her Home Room.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I would like to attend. Please call me to inform me of the dates.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I am unable to attend, but please call me with an alternative plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I am unable to attend.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent signature

APPENDIX H

Invitation For Team Planning Meetings—Spanish Translation

**Washington Middle School**

716 E. La Habra Blvd. La Habra, Blvd. 90631

Fecha

Estimados Padres,

Nuestro equipo gustaría invitarles a nuestra junta de planear cada mes, para una o más jueves cuando empezamos tarde. Estas juntas son cada mes entre las 8:15 to 9:15 por la mañana. Planeamos actividades, resolvemos problemas, y creamos amistades. Su apoyo y ayuda nos ayudará planear mejor para su hijo/hija y la escuela.

Sinceramente,

Miembros del equipo

.....  
Corta aquí y devuelve con su hijo/hija a su clase base.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sí, me gustaría asistir. Por favor de llamarme con las fechas.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, no es posible asistir, pero llamame con un alternativo.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, no es posible asistir.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nombre de estudiante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma de padre

## APPENDIX I

### Invitation To Participate On School Task Force

#### **Washington Middle School**

716 E. La Habra Blvd. La Habra, Blvd. 90631

Date

Dear Parents, Family Members, and Business Representatives,

We are forming a school-site Task Force Advisory Group comprised of parents and community leaders to assist our school community in becoming a better and more efficient place for learning. We need your help.

We would like you to seriously consider investing some of your time and effort, along with members of the school staff, to investigate some of the challenges that our school now faces in educating the children for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Our effort will include a program that will actively pursue community and parent involvement—particularly with those who have traditionally not participated in their children's education—as well as forming a long-lasting community-school partnership.

Please consider this opportunity and send in the attached request for information, or call Washington Middle School at (562)690-2374 and ask for Gary Mantey (Principal), Emilie Goss, Julie Orr, or Barbara Osburn.

Sincerely,

Gary Mantey, Principal

## APPENDIX J

### Response To Task Force Invitation

(Postcard)

Yes, I would like to know more about your newest plan for parent-community school involvement at Washington Middle School.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_

You may contact me at (telephone number) \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested because I am a \_\_\_\_\_ (parent, community member, local business representative).

## APPENDIX K

### Invitation To Participate On School Task Force—Spanish Translation

#### **Washington Middle School**

716 E. La Habra Blvd. La Habra, Blvd. 90631

Fecha

Estimados Padres, Miembros Familiares y Representantes de Negocias,

Nosotros estamos formando un comite de refuerzo de trabajo para asistir nuestra escuela comunitaria con un grupo consejero, padres y líderes comunitarios para hacer de nuestra escuela un lugar mejor y más eficiente para el aprendizaje. Nosotros necesitamos su ayuda y su compromiso para los niños y familias que componen nuestra escuela.

Nos gustaría que usted seriamente invirtiera algo de su tiempo y esfuerzo, al igual que miembros de la escuela y otras personas de la comunidad. Para investigar algunos de los problemas, los cuales nuestra escuela está afrontando en relación a la educación de los niños del siglo 21. Nuestro esfuerzo incluire un programa que activamente buscare que la comunidad y los Padres están más involucrados principalmente esos padres que tradicionalmente no han participado en la educación de sus hijos, al igual que formar un largo compañerismo entre la comunidad y la escuela.

Por favor considere esta oportunidad y envíe la información adherida, o llame a la escuela Secundaria Washington, Sr. Gary Mantey (Director) al número (562) 690-2374 preguntar por Emilie Goss, Julie Orr, o Barbara Osburn.

Sinceramente,

Gary Mantey, Director

## APPENDIX L

### Response To Task Force Invitation--Spanish Translation

(Tarjeta Postal)

Sí, me gustaría saber más acerca de su nuevo plan de padres y la comunidad envuelta en la Escuela Washington Middle School.

Mí nombre es \_\_\_\_\_

Usted me puede contactar al (número telefónico) \_\_\_\_\_

Yo estoy interesado porque yo soy un \_\_\_\_\_  
(padre, un miembro comunitario, representante de un negocio local)

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